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FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2322  
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L FREETOWN 000559

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/W (ESPRUILL), AF/RSA  
(MSKARDON/CTRINGLE/MBITTRICK)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/01/2018  
TAGS: [KPKO](#) [MASS](#) [MCAP](#) [PGOV](#) [SL](#)  
SUBJECT: SIERRA LEONE WILLING BUT NOT READY TO CONTRIBUTE  
TO AMISOM

REF: A. STATE 125135  
[1](#)B. FREETOWN 519

Classified By: Ambassador June Carter Perry for reasons 1.4 (b/d)

[1](#)1. (C) In response to reftel A, the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) stated its willingness to contribute battalions to peacekeeping operations, including the Africa Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM), if properly equipped and trained prior to departure. The RSLAF is primed for Africa Contingency Operations Technical Assistance (ACOTA) training. The U.S. and the United Kingdom-led International Military Advisory Training Team (IMATT) agree that the RSLAF may need six to nine months of training, equipping and organizing under ACOTA to be ready to deploy. On 26 November 2008, the RSLAF notified the United Nations of their intent to contribute a Reconnaissance Company to the United Nations Mission in Darfur, Sudan, but no timeline was provided. Post has requested an ACOTA assessment team visit by early 2009 (reftel B).

[1](#)2. (C) In the field, RSLAF units are currently capable of independent self-sustainment by an echelon slice of Force (United Nations/Economic Community of West Africa) logistic units - transport, supply, maintenance, communications and medical - but these need to be connected to second line sources.

[1](#)3. (C) In terms of providing for a contingent rotation to an enduring mission, the RSLAF has the greatest potential in the infantry role up to battalion level. A transportation company would also be possible. Specialist sub-units up to platoon strength might be feasible, but would be more difficult at this time to sustain in an enduring mission due to limited manpower.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: The RSLAF is predominantly a light infantry organization but also contains Reconnaissance, Engineer, Military Police, Logistics and Signals elements that may have utility in Peace Support Operations in their own right. RSLAF aspires to maintain a battalion level commitment to United Nations Peace Support Operations, but an incremental approach, coupled with a sufficient time horizon for preparation, is necessary to achieve this goal. Post supports the RSLAF's desire to assist in regional operations, but recognizes that significant encouragement and investment from the USG, in particular, and other donors is needed. End comment.  
PERRY